

REMARKS

Pursuant to the contemporaneous Request for Continued Examination, Applicants kindly request entry of the above amendments and reconsideration of the rejections contained in the Office Action of August 19, 2003.

The new set of claims corresponds to prior claims 19-36. Claim 37, 52 and 55 correspond to prior claims 19, 33 and 36, respectively. Furthermore, each of these claims now recites that the stirring member is a blade member having a screw form, the blade member is positioned so as to correspond to the center of rotation of the crucible and at the inside bottom of the crucible. Each of these claims further recites that the method or apparatus includes a resistance heating heater to heat and melt raw material melt.

Both Nishizawa and Atami fail to disclose or suggest a blade member having a screw form in the crucible. For this reason alone, the claims as now presented distinguish over these references.

Further distinctions between the claims as now presented and the references cited by the Examiner will become apparent from the comparison of the two. As such, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now pending in the present application clearly patentably distinguish over the prior art of record, and indication of such is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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